

EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM

26 MARCH 2003

Chair: Mr B Shewry (UNISON)

Representatives of the Council:

Councillors:	* Mrs Bath	* Lavingia (4)
	* Billson (1)	* Osborn (3)
	* Burchell (3)	* N. Shah
	* Currie	

Representatives of HTCC:	Ms B Courtney	Vacancy
	† Mrs S Maguire	

Representatives of UNISON:	* Mr D Boyle	† Mr J Rattray
	* Mrs K Bubbenzer	* Ms W Williams

* Denotes Member/Employee Representative Present

† Denotes Apology Received

(1), (3), (4) Denote Category of Reserve Member

[Note: Ms D Prasad, who it was noted had recently been appointed as the new assistant Health and Safety Branch Officer, attended the meeting as an observer].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS -NIL

PART II - MINUTES

43. **Attendance by Reserve Council Members: RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Reserve Member</u>
Councillor Janet Cowan	Councillor Billson
Councillor Dighé	Councillor Burchell
Councillor Mrs Joyce Nickolay	Councillor Osborn
Councillor Toms	Councillor Lavingia

44. **Declarations of Interest: RESOLVED:** That the following declaration of interest be received and noted: -

<u>Member</u>	<u>Declaration of Interest</u>
Councillor Currie	Lifelong Member of UNISON

45. **Arrangement of Agenda: RESOLVED:** That all the items on the agenda be considered with the press and public present.

46. **Minutes: RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Employees' Consultative Forum held on 28 January 2003, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

47. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:** The Forum received a written report which updated Members on the following issues:

- (i) West Lodge Schools: Minute 16 (12 September 2002 meeting): The Forum were advised that UNISON and Education management had now agreed a joint recommendation to the Governing Bodies of West Lodge Schools, which was as follows:

- (1) That the school, together with the LEA, should explore other chair options to avoid or reduce the risks associated with moving the current chairs given the physical restrictions of the area of the building in question.

(2) That the draft report of the Osteopaths for Industry company and the Unison comments on it should be referred to the Council's Occupational Health Physician when seeing the caretaking staff about their health and capacity to undertake the work.

(3) That, in the meantime, the Site Supervisor and school management, following the guidance provided, should carefully plan movement of the chairs.

It was noted that safety arrangements in schools were now included within an Internal Audit review programme which included a check that suitable and sufficient risk assessments were place.

(ii) Housing Department Incident and Accident Reporting Procedures- Minute 36(5): It was noted that the independent officer undertaking the investigation in relation to the above had now submitted an initial draft report to officers and UNISON who had responded with comments.

(iii) Equality Monitoring Report for 1 April 2002 – 30 September 2002 – Minute 42: The Forum were advised that, further to suggestions made at the previous meeting, the Employment Development Unit within Personnel Services which currently provided a placement service to a number of local organisations were now to extend this to The Bridge.

Arrangements for a Council sponsored job fair, which was scheduled to be held at Byron Hall on 30 May 2003, were also outlined and it was noted that, whilst the fair would be open to everyone, the principal focus would be to encourage disabled people to apply for jobs in the Council.

It was reported that the terms of reference for a special project on improving the appointment of Asian applicants were currently being drafted and that Councillors, Harrow Council for Racial Equality and other partner organisations would be consulted on them. It was hoped that an initial meeting of the project group would take place in late April or early May. It was noted that a number of local organisations would be consulted on the project. A Member of the Forum suggested that local Asian Community Groups be added to the list of consultees.

The Forum were further advised that criteria for secondments, 'acting up' and internal promotion were to be included on the agenda for the 26 March 2003 Corporate Joint Committee.

RESOLVED: That the information outlined in the above report be noted.

48. **Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations: RESOLVED:** To note that there were no public questions, petitions or deputations made at this meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rules 18, 15 and 16 (all Part 4B of the Constitution) respectively.

49. **Half Year Health and Safety Performance Report for the Period 1 April 2002 to 30 September 2002:** The Forum received a report of the Executive Director (Organisational Development) which provided an update on the Authority's health and safety performance for the period 1 April 2002 to 30 September 2002. The report gave an overview of the performance of the Authority as a whole during this period and a breakdown of the performance of each department. Progress made in meeting action plan objectives was also outlined and a response to issues raised by the Forum and the General Purposes and Licensing Committee arising from their consideration of the Annual Health and Safety Performance Report 2001/.2002 at meetings held on 3 October 2002 and 3 December 2002, respectively, was set out.

The following minor corrections were noted:

- Paragraph 3.2, bullet point 3 - To read 'Handling and Moving Training...'
- Table 8 – The total number of incidents was 483 not 485
- Table 11 – The total number of persons from the Education Department attending courses was 58 not 88. The total number of persons from Social Services and Housing Department attending courses was 82 not 83.

Supplementary information was provided at the meeting which, further to a request of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee, set out the number of incidents as a percentage of full time equivalent staff and total number of staff.

The Forum noted the contents of the report, praised the clarity and easy to understand manner in which the information was presented, and sought clarification on a number of issues.

During the discussion which followed, several Members expressed concern at the number of incidents classified under the category 'violence and aggression' and queried what measures were being taken to reduce the number of these incidents. In response, officers pointed out that, although the Authority regarded all incidents of this nature as serious, only one incident was so serious as to be RIDDOR reportable (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995). Furthermore, it was emphasised that it was believed that the apparent increase in these types of incidents in part reflected the fact that the Authority placed increasing emphasis on the importance of reporting them and encouraged staff accordingly. It was stressed that the Authority were committed to reducing violence and aggression towards staff and sought to achieve this through a number of means, including via a working group which had been established specifically to examine the issue. It was noted that, arising out of the working group's suggestions, Parking Attendants were now trained in conflict resolution and appropriate signage was being considered for reception and other public areas of Council buildings.

In response to a further query raised, officers emphasised that, although the Authority's performance was monitored by this Forum bi-annually, departmental and divisional safety groups reviewed health and safety performance on a more regular basis.

The Forum welcomed moves to progress 'benchmarking' to allow comparison between the Authority's health and safety performance and that of other London Authorities, although it was noted that there were significant barriers to this due to the fact that different information collation techniques were used by different Authorities. Members also suggested that future reports regarding health and safety performance place greater emphasis on comparing performance with that of previous years. It was advised that the full year report would make such comparisons, although it was problematic as departmental re-organisation meant that it was frequently difficult to make meaningful comparisons.

Following requests from UNISON representatives it was agreed that the possibility of providing a future meeting with a break down of departmental incidents/accidents by gender and analysis of road traffic accidents to indicate those involving mobile phone usage would be investigated.

RESOLVED: That the health and safety performance report and action plan progress for the first half of the reporting year 2002/2003 be noted, subject to the comments outlined above.

50. **West Lodge School:** This item was discussed as a matter arising from the Minutes (See Minute 47).

51. **Any Other Business: RESOLVED:** That the action outlined below be agreed:

- **Resignation of Linda Anousis as UNISON Branch Secretary**
The Forum were advised that Linda Anousis had tendered her resignation as UNISON Branch Secretary. The Forum requested that a letter be sent to Ms Anousis to convey their thanks for her valued contribution to the work of the Forum.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.40 pm, closed at 8.33 pm)

(Signed) BRYAN SHEWRY
(Chair)